



Committee On Finance

Max Baucus, Ranking Member

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Contact: Laura Hayes
202-224-4515

Statement of Senator Max Baucus on the Signing of the Burma Sanctions Bill

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) U.S. Senator Max Baucus, Ranking Democrat on the Senate Finance Committee, issued the following statement concerning enactment of the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act of 2003 (H.R. 2330), which President Bush signed this afternoon:

“The Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act of 2003 that President Bush signed today represents a new, common-sense approach to U.S. sanctions policy.

“As we have seen in the past, unilateral sanctions are rarely effective. They do little to destabilize the brutal, oppressive regimes that are the target of the sanctions, and instead only hurt innocent people – both in the target country and in the United States. Moreover, Congress usually has been given no way to review the sanctions to determine whether they are having any effect.

“The legislation signed today addresses this dilemma in two important ways. First, it seeks the cooperation and participation of our allies, particularly in the region. Second, it requires Congress to review the sanctions every year. If they are not having the desired effect, Congress can try something different.

“These common sense reforms should be implemented in all future sanctions legislation. With them, we could avoid maintaining sanctions long past the time we should have changed our approach, as has been the case with Cuba.

“I will continue to work to bring common sense reforms to U.S. sanctions policy.”